

Annex A - Appendix I

DIRECTION & CONTROL

Alert, Reporting, Warning, Notification, and Communications

I. GENERAL

State-level reporting, warning, notification and communications are included in the *COVEOP*. In addition there are several hurricane-specific requirements, which must be considered.

II. ASSUMPTIONS

- A. There will be an immediate and continuous demand for information needed in the decision-making process.
- B. State agencies and local governments will be the best and most immediate sources of vital information regarding damage assessment and initial response requirements.
- C. There may be delays in acquiring and assimilating the information.
- D. Communications problems, damage, weather, flooding and other environmental factors may restrict situation assessment operations.
- E. The coordination and information gathering process will include key state agencies and local, state and federal governments, depending on the phase of the event (*i.e., weather emergency operations, assessment or recovery*).

III. COMMUNICATIONS PATHWAYS

The Virginia Department of Emergency Management (*VDEM*) has the legal responsibility for the dissemination of essential information relating to severe weather and other potential emergencies that threaten the Commonwealth. The importance of contacting the Virginia Emergency Operations Center (*VEOC*) quickly after an incident occurs cannot be over-emphasized, as the sooner the notification occurs, the earlier state communications resources can be mobilized to assist. The *VEOC* has numerous, redundant communications pathways which are monitored 24 hours a day in order to facilitate the rapid notification and dissemination of event information.

Communication Pathways - Continued

A. Communication Systems

The communication systems listed below allow for information exchange between the VEOC, federal agencies, localities and field personnel regardless of an incident's impact on existing infrastructure and facilities.

- 1) VCIN - Virginia Criminal Information Network (*addresses VEOC and VEO1*) is a disaster-resistant, secure network with a terminal usually located in a 24-hour dispatch facility or local Public Safety Answering Point in each locality in Virginia.
- 2) WebEOC - VDEM crisis management system
- 3) VEOC email (veoc@vdem.virginia.gov)
- 4) SWAN - Statewide Alert Network
- 5) STARS - State Agency Radio System
- 6) VEOC Telephone 1-800-468-8892 & 1-804-674-2400
- 7) VEOC Fax 1-804-674-2419
- 8) VEOC Satellite Telephone
- 9) NAWAS - National Warning and Alert System
- 10) VAWAS - Virginia Warning and Alert System
- 11) WAWAS - Washington Area Warning and Alert System
- 12) Surry and North Anna Insta-phone
- 13) Audio and WebEx Combination conference call bridge with web link supplement for presentations, graphics, etc.
- 14) EMNet - Emergency Management Network
- 15) ORION - Overlay Regional Interoperability Network (*Hampton Roads Area*)
Select VEOC from drop down menu.
- 16) FEMA National Radio System (*FNARS*).
- 17) Regional Incident Communication Coordination Systems (*RICCS*).

Communication Pathways - Continued

B. Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service (RACES)

The VEOC Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service (*RACES*) station is used as an alternate means of communications between local jurisdictions and the state. Information can be relayed by voice and/or data. There are three levels of readiness (*notification, standby, and deployment*) dependent on the Hurricane Readiness Condition.

Amateur Radio (*Call sign N4VEM*)

- 1) Old Dominion Emergency Net
- 2) VHF Repeater (*Tidewater to Richmond via Williamsburg Repeater*)
- 3) VHF Repeater (*West Central VA to Virginia Emergency Operations Center (VEOC) via Lexington Repeater*)
- 4) VHF Repeater (*Central VA*)
- 5) NERA Linked Repeater System (*Northern Virginia to Virginia Emergency Operations Center VEOC*)
- 6) IRLP Emergency Network
- 7) Virginia Digital Emergency Net (*V DEN*)
- 8) HF Win Link Users address messages to n4vem@winlink.org. Attachments welcomed.
- 9) Email address: races@vdem.virginia.gov

C. Conference Calls

The Virginia Emergency Response Team (*VERT*) Plans Section will conduct conference calls with local governments, state agencies, non-governmental and federal partners, to discuss weather forecasts (*i.e., storm arrival and potential impact*) and operational issues. Conference calls will be conducted as deemed necessary by the VERT Coordinator, Hurricane Program Manager and VERT Plans Chief. The State Warning Point will notify conference call participants using email, Statewide Alert Network (*SWAN*) and mass facsimile. Conference call notification will include date and time of call, as well as access information for dialing-in and logging into WebEx, if capable.

D. Virginia Department of Emergency Management (VDEM) Website

The VDEM web page may be utilized to access situation reports, media releases and links to various agencies to obtain information; however, this information may not be current. The VDEM crisis management system (*WebEOC*) may be utilized by local jurisdictions to send local situation reports (*SITREP*), Initial Damage Assessments (*IDA*) and requests for resources to the VEOC and view status updates.

IV. DISSEMINATION

- A. Tropical Cyclone Forecast Advisories are issued by the National Hurricane Center every six (6) hours, but more frequently if the system threatens human population. The VEOC Watch Center will monitor and track named or numbered tropical systems and update HURREVAC at the VEOC.
- B. The VEOC Watch Center will transmit Tropical Cyclone Forecast Advisories data to local jurisdictions via Virginia Criminal Information Network (*VCIN*) when the system appears to threaten the Commonwealth of Virginia within 120 hours (*5 days*).
- C. In the event of *VCIN* failure, weather warnings will be issued via warning circuit and/or telephone. Significant weather information, such as watches and specific advisories, will be sent via facsimile, telephone, and/or Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service (*RACES*) and placed on *VDEM* web site and the *VDEM* crisis management system (*WebEOC*).
- D. Once issued, situation reports (*SITREPS*) will be sent by email or mass facsimile to the Governor's Office, Governor's Cabinet, state agency directors, state agencies, and local jurisdictions. Situation reports will also be sent to local jurisdictions by email or mass facsimile or other available pathways.
- E. Conference calls and/or WebEX sessions will be scheduled, as necessary. VEOC will notify state and federal agencies and voluntary organizations by email, mass facsimile and Virginia State-Wide Alert Network (*SWAN*) and local jurisdictions by email, *VCIN*, mass facsimile and *SWAN*. The schedule of the conference calls and the telephone number will be provided by the VEOC.
- F. The VEOC Watch Center will establish High Frequency (*HF*) Radio communications with DHS/FEMA Regions I and IV.
- G. In the event of telephone or *VCIN* failure, information can be received or transmitted by *WebEOC*, Amateur Civil Emergency Service (*RACES*), Warning Circuits, or High Frequency (*HF*) radio.

V. COLLECTION PROCESS

VDEM has the responsibility for collecting essential information relating to emergencies and disasters in the Commonwealth. The following provides the methods of collection:

A. Status Assessment Reports

The primary method of receiving local and state agency status reports is facsimile or VDEM Crisis Management System (*WebEOC*). Secondary methods include telephone or Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service (*RACES*). The VEOC Watch Center receives these reports (*situation and damage*) and refers them directly to the Virginia Emergency Response Team (*VERT*), Planning Section (*ESF-5*). The Planning Section collects, analyzes, and displays the information received as an aid in planning response and recovery operations and the preparation of state situation reports (*SITREPS*). The two types of status assessment reports are the situation report, based on the essential elements of information; and the initial damage assessment report and data summary reports, to facilitate the state in asking for federal or other assistance.

B. Requests for Assistance

The preferred method for receiving local requests for assistance is through the VDEM crisis management system, WebEOC. Additional methods for relaying requests for assistance to the VEOC include telephone, email, and fax. Alternative methods include Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service (*RACES*), VCIN, High Frequency (*HF*) radio or warning systems, EM Net or satellite communications. All requests are received by the Local Liaison section and referred to the appropriate Emergency Support Function (*ESF*). The appropriate ESF Group Leader will track the request for assistance through its completion. All completed requests for assistance will be closed in the VDEM Crisis Management System (*WebEOC*) by the assigned ESF.

VI. SPECIFIC WEATHER PRODUCTS

The following are brief descriptions of National Weather Service (*NWS*) weather products disseminated by VEOC.

- A. **Hurricane Watch** - A condition "set" and established by the National Weather Service **48 hours** prior to the arrival of tropical storm force winds for the geographic area specified in the watch.
- B. **Hurricane Warning** - A condition "set" and established by the National Weather Service **36 hours** prior to the arrival of tropical storm force winds for the geographic area specified in the warning.
- C. **Tropical Cyclone Forecast/Advisory** - Issued by the National Hurricane Center every six (6) hours, at 0500, 1100, 1700 & 2300 hours, or more frequently if human population is threatened. This information provides wind field information, direction and speed of the tropical cyclone. Wind speeds are in knots (*nautical miles per hours*), distance in nautical miles, and times in Coordinated Universal Time (*UTC*) as opposed to local time. This information is to be used in the HURREVAC model for tracking and for "what-if" risk analyses.